

Sermon Outline
Burton Memorial United Methodist Church
“Mary: The Face of the humble, poor, and oppressed”
(Part IV of the Advent series “The Faces of Christmas”)
December 21, 2025

Scripture

Micha 5:2
Luke 1:46-55

Core Idea and purpose

Core theological ideas from earlier sermons in the series:

- (11/30/2025) Sometimes, to follow Christ, we must holler, “Darn the torpedoes, full steam ahead!!”
- (12/07/2025) To be the face of Jesus, we love everyone, proclaim the Kingdom of God, and seek justice by standing in solidarity with people who are poor, oppressed, and marginalized.
- (12/14/2025) God gives us a choice. We can either have a malleable heart and make the Kingdom of God our highest priority or an unchanging heart, like King Herod, and continue with a worldly priority.

Core theological idea: God can identify with the humble, poor, and oppressed people of the world because God became the human son of a working class, oppressed couple.

Challenge/purpose: To encourage people to stand in solidarity with humble, poor, and oppressed people.

The Sermon

Why did God become a human named Jesus? Every Christmas we celebrate the incarnation - God becoming human and dwelling among us. Remember, there is one God and this one God is made up of three persons: FATHER, SON, and HOLY SPIRIT. The three persons come together in perfect love as the one God. To worship one is to worship all three because the three make up the one God. Of the three persons, the SON emptied himself and became a human named Jesus. Why? Why did God do this?

God became human for five reasons. They are:

- 1) To reveal God’s character
 - If you want to know God’s character, look at Jesus.
 - We discover that God is a good, righteous, just, and loving God.
- 2) To be our perfect example
 - As fully human and fully God, Jesus lived a sinless life motivated by love.

Sermon Outline
Burton Memorial United Methodist Church
“Mary: The Face of the humble, poor, and oppressed”
(Part IV of the Advent series “The Faces of Christmas”)
December 21, 2025

- Thus, Jesus is the perfect example for us to follow
- 3) To ‘get us’ – to relate to us
 - Since Jesus is God in the flesh, God knows what it’s like to be human – to rejoice and suffer as a human
 - When we cry out to God in anguish, God understands what we are going through.
- 4) To defeat death for us
 - Jesus allowed people to unjustly execute him so he can face death and defeat death on our behalf.
 - With death defeated, we can have an eternal relationship with God.
- 5) To identify with humble, poor & oppressed people

Today, we will talk in detail about this last reason for God becoming a human – to identify with humble, poor, and oppressed people.

When Mary went to visit Elizabeth, her elderly & pregnant cousin, the baby in Elizabeth’s womb leaped for joy. Elizabeth proclaimed, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!”

In response, Mary recited a poem of praise to the Lord God Almighty. Listen to some of the words from this poem.

*He [God] has performed mighty deeds with his arm;
he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.
He has brought down rulers from their thrones
but has lifted up the humble.
He has filled the hungry with good things
but has sent the rich away empty.
He has helped his servant Israel,
remembering to be merciful
to Abraham and his descendants forever,
just as he promised our ancestors.*

This poem illustrates that one of the reasons God became a human was to identify with humble, poor, and oppressed people. According to this poem, God scatters those who are proud and lifts the humble. God also fills the hungry with good things but sends the rich away empty. This is a poetic way of saying that God identifies with humble, poor, and oppressed people.

Sermon Outline
Burton Memorial United Methodist Church
“Mary: The Face of the humble, poor, and oppressed”
(Part IV of the Advent series “The Faces of Christmas”)
December 21, 2025

To understand this, we must first acknowledge that God loves all people. God loves both the rich & poor; both the powerful & weak; both the free & the slave. God loves us all and wants to identify with all humanity. God, however, did not need to become a rich person to identify with rich people because God was already the richest being in the universe. God owns everything! In addition, God did not need to become a powerful person to identify with powerful people because God was already all-powerful. God is forever King of kings. So, when God became a human, God did not become a powerful emperor, mighty general or rich merchant. Instead, God became an ‘Average Joe’ who struggled through an earthly life.

God needed to become a humble, poor, and oppressed person to identify with humble, poor, and oppressed people. This is because God has never been and never will be poor and oppressed. So, when God became human named Jesus, God became the Jewish son of an average carpenter living under the oppressive hammer of the mighty Roman Empire. Like most people, Jesus’ family had to struggle to make a living. We should also remember that Jesus’ family became political refugees as they fled the massacre of babies and toddlers in Bethlehem.

If God purposefully became a human to identify with humble, poor, and oppressed people, then we too should identify with humble, poor, and oppressed people. We should look at the world through their eyes. We should try to understand their struggles. The more we do that, the more we can love all people.

The next time you meet a homeless person, do not ignore that person or give that person a dollar as you quickly pass him/her by. Take the time to talk with the person. Perhaps share a meal at McDonalds. Learn the person’s story. Be sure to do more listening than talking. In this way, you will identify with that person.

The next time you watch a controversial news story, talk to someone from a different background who may not share your point of view. Again, be sure to do more listening than talking. In this way, you will identify with that person.

When you are at a social function and you notice someone sitting alone, sit next to that person. Strike up a conversation with that person, even if you feel uncomfortable. In this way, you will identify with that person.

The Lord God Almighty became a human named Jesus to identify with humble, poor, and oppressed people. As followers of Jesus, we must follow this example and identify with humble, poor, and oppressed people.

Sermon Outline
Burton Memorial United Methodist Church
“Mary: The Face of the humble, poor, and oppressed”
(Part IV of the Advent series “The Faces of Christmas”)
December 21, 2025

Sermon Outline

- I. Why did God become a human named Jesus?
 - A. Every Christmas we celebrate the incarnation - God becoming human and dwelling among us.
 - B. Remember, there is one God and this one God is made up of three persons: FATHER, SON, and HOLY SPIRIT.
 - The three persons come together in perfect love as the one God.
 - To worship one is to worship all three because the three make up the one God.
 - Of the three persons, the SON emptied himself and became a human named Jesus.
 - C. Why? Why did God do this?
- II. God became human for four reasons. They are:
 - A. One: To reveal God’s character
 - If you want to know God’s character, look at Jesus.
 - We discover that God is a good, righteous, just, and loving God.
 - B. Two: To be our perfect example
 - As fully human and fully God, Jesus lived a sinless life motivated by love.
 - Thus, Jesus is the perfect example for us to follow
 - C. Three: To ‘get us’ – to relate to us
 - Since Jesus is God in the flesh, God knows what it’s like to be human – to rejoice and suffer as a human
 - When we cry out to God in anguish, God understands what we are going through.
 - D. Four: To defeat death for us
 - Jesus allowed people to unjustly execute him so he can face death and defeat death on our behalf.

Sermon Outline
Burton Memorial United Methodist Church
“Mary: The Face of the humble, poor, and oppressed”
(Part IV of the Advent series “The Faces of Christmas”)
December 21, 2025

- With death defeated, we can have an eternal relationship with God.
- E. Five: To identify with humble, poor & oppressed people
- III. Today, we will talk in detail about this last reason for God becoming a human – to identify with humble, poor, and oppressed people.
- A. When Mary went to visit Elizabeth, her elderly & pregnant cousin, the baby in Elizabeth’s womb leaped for joy.
- Elizabeth proclaimed, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!”
 - In response, Mary recited a poem of praise to the Lord God Almighty. Listen to some of the words from this poem.

*He [God] has performed mighty deeds with his arm;
he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost
thoughts.
He has brought down rulers from their thrones
but has lifted up the humble.
He has filled the hungry with good things
but has sent the rich away empty.
He has helped his servant Israel,
remembering to be merciful
to Abraham and his descendants forever,
just as he promised our ancestors.”*

- This poem illustrates that one of the reasons God became a human was to identify with humble, poor, and oppressed people.
 - According to this poem,

Sermon Outline
Burton Memorial United Methodist Church
“Mary: The Face of the humble, poor, and oppressed”
(Part IV of the Advent series “The Faces of Christmas”)
December 21, 2025

- God scatters those who are proud and
 - lifts the humble.
 - God also fills the hungry with good things
 - but sends the rich away empty.
 - This is a poetic way of saying that God identifies with humble, poor, and oppressed people.
- B. To understand this, we must first acknowledge that God loves all people.
- God loves...
 - Both the rich & poor;
 - both the powerful & weak;
 - both the free & the slave.
 - God loves us all and wants to identify with all humanity.
 - God, however, did not need to become a rich person to identify with rich people because God was already the richest being in the universe. God owns everything!
 - In addition, God did not need to become a powerful person to identify with powerful people because God was already all-powerful. God is already and forever King of kings.
 - So, when God became a human, God did not become a powerful emperor, mighty general or rich merchant.
 - Instead, God became an ‘Average Joe’ who struggled through an earthly life.
- C. God needed to become a humble, poor, and oppressed person to identify with humble, poor, and oppressed people.
- This is because God has never been and never will be poor and oppressed.
 - So, when God became human named Jesus, God became the Jewish son of an average carpenter living under the oppressive hammer of the mighty Roman Empire.

Sermon Outline
Burton Memorial United Methodist Church
“Mary: The Face of the humble, poor, and oppressed”
(Part IV of the Advent series “The Faces of Christmas”)
December 21, 2025

- Like most people, Jesus’ family had to struggle to make a living.
- We should also remember that Jesus’ family became political refugees as they fled the massacre of babies and toddlers in Bethlehem.

IV. If God purposefully became a human to identify with humble, poor, and oppressed people, then we too should identify with humble, poor, and oppressed people.

A. We should look at the world through their eyes.

- We should try to understand their struggles.
- The more we do that, the more we can love all people.

B. The next time you meet a homeless person,

- do not ignore that person or give that person a dollar as you quickly pass him/her by.
- Take the time to talk with the person.
- Perhaps share a meal at McDonalds.
- Learn the person’s story.
- Be sure to do more listening than talking.
- In this way, you will identify with that person.

C. The next time you watch a controversial news story, talk to someone from a different background who may not share your point of view.

- Again, be sure to do more listening than talking.
- In this way, you will identify with that person.

D. When you are at a social function and you notice someone sitting alone, sit next to that person.

- Strike up a conversation with that person, even if you feel uncomfortable.
- In this way, you will identify with that person.

Sermon Outline
Burton Memorial United Methodist Church
“Mary: The Face of the humble, poor, and oppressed”
(Part IV of the Advent series “The Faces of Christmas”)
December 21, 2025

- E. The Lord God Almighty became a human named Jesus to identify with humble, poor, and oppressed people.
- As followers of Jesus, we must follow this example and identify with humble, poor, and oppressed people.